

**GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF WRITTEN UNDER KEEL
CLEARANCE GUIDANCE FOR TANK VESSEL MASTERS**

1. Tank barge owners and operators must provide written guidance to towing vessel operators on acceptable under-keel clearance criteria.
 2. The purpose of this section is to create an effective line of communication between the vessel owner or operator, the master, and the pilot in order to establish a safe under-keel clearance prior to the vessel entering port or getting underway. Tankship owners and operators must provide vessel masters with either written under-keel clearance guidance or must directly participate in the decision to transit the port. This requirement will prevent situations in which a vessel master (and pilot) may feel compelled to enter port with a less than desirable under-keel clearance because of scheduling pressure.
 3. Written under-keel clearance guidance should reflect port-specific considerations. It is sufficient to include a clause instructing the master to consider the unique characteristics of the port and consult with the pilot about any port idiosyncrasies. Specific clearance limits such as 2 feet in the Port of Houston or 1 meter in the Port of San Francisco would meet this requirement, but are not required. The emphasis of this guidance should be to consider the under-keel clearance recommended by the port experts (generally the pilots) and the facility owners prior to deciding whether the anticipated under-keel clearance of the vessel is adequate.
- ◆ The following examples should help illustrate the intent of this requirement:

EXAMPLE 1:

All vessels, when transiting any waterway shall maintain a ____ foot under-keel clearance. This applies to all U.S. ports except the following:

1. All vessels transiting into Long Beach will maintain 10% of the ship's deepest draft as the under-keel clearance.
2. All vessels transiting Richmond Entrance Channel, Pt.rero Reach, and Richmond Inner Harbor shall maintain a ____ foot under-keel clearance.
3. All ships transiting the Houston Ship Channel shall maintain at least a ____ inch under-keel clearance.
4. All ships transiting the port of San Francisco shall maintain at least at least a ____ meter under-keel clearance or 10% of the ship's deepest draft, whichever is greater.

If a vessel is not able to maintain the required under-keel clearance or requires an exemption to these standards, then the Master shall:

- a) Inform the Vessel Operations Manager of the calculated under-keel clearance. The Vessel Operations Manager shall then inform the master whether it is allowable to proceed considering, but not limited to, the anticipated clearance, any Captain of the Port guidance, and the pilot's clearance recommendation.
- b) Record the communication with the Vessel Operations Manager in the ship's deck logbook.

EXAMPLE 2

The minimum under-keel clearance shall be ____ meters for all U.S. ports unless a greater clearance is recommended by the pilot, Captain of the Port, or other port authority. In the case where a greater clearance is recommended, the master shall contact Vessel Operations and provide the following information:

1. The calculated under-keel clearance and the clearance recommended by the vessel pilot.
2. Own recommendation whether the calculated under-keel clearance is adequate.
3. Recommended course of action.

Vessel Operations will consider the information provided by the vessel master and advise whether to delay entry into port or take other appropriate action.

The vessel master shall make an entry into the vessel's deck log reflecting the communication with Vessel Operations.

EXAMPLE 3.

The minimum under-keel clearance shall be based on port-specific recommendations provided by the pilot. If the calculated under-keel clearance is not within the recommended clearance, the vessel master is authorized to any action necessary to meet the recommended clearance. This may include delaying vessel transiting the vessel, proceeding to anchorage, or employing a tug for assistance during transit.